

Ch. 1. Wood of a tree. All L & b. H
(presented to Linn.)

Diogenes

For the

71.2009.085 04477

(presented to Lindo's)

Alc. & L. book

Diogenes

For the

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Curios and Relics

Furniture

Chairs

Made from Wood of a House
built by Abraham and
Thomas Lincoln

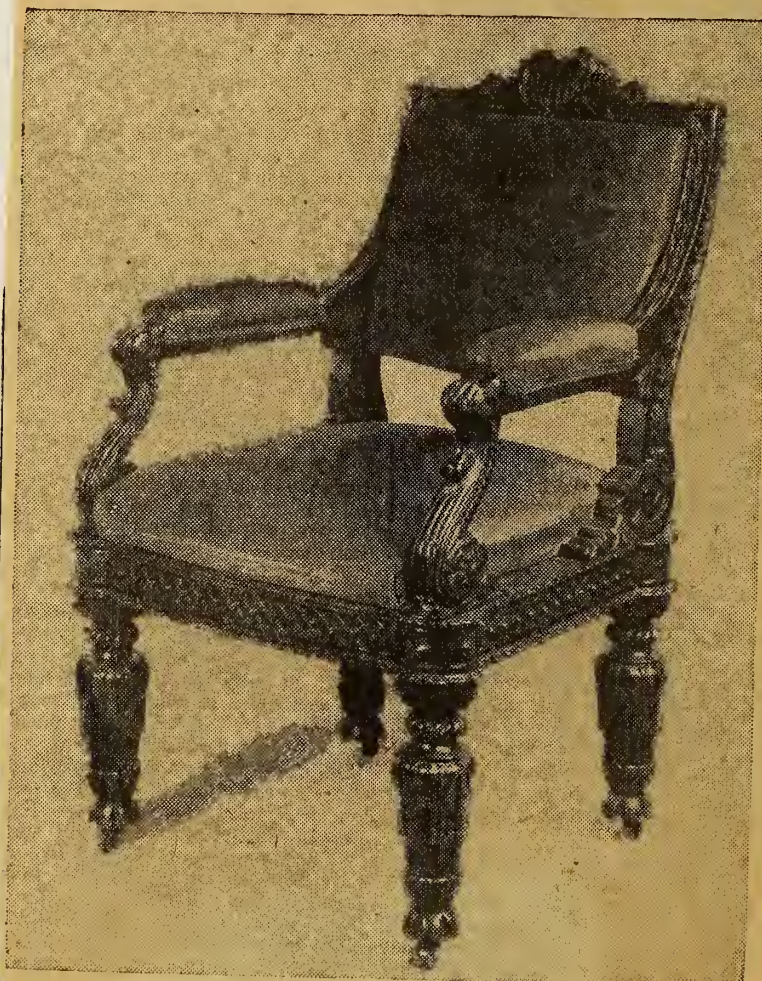
Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

NEW YORK SUN, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1933.

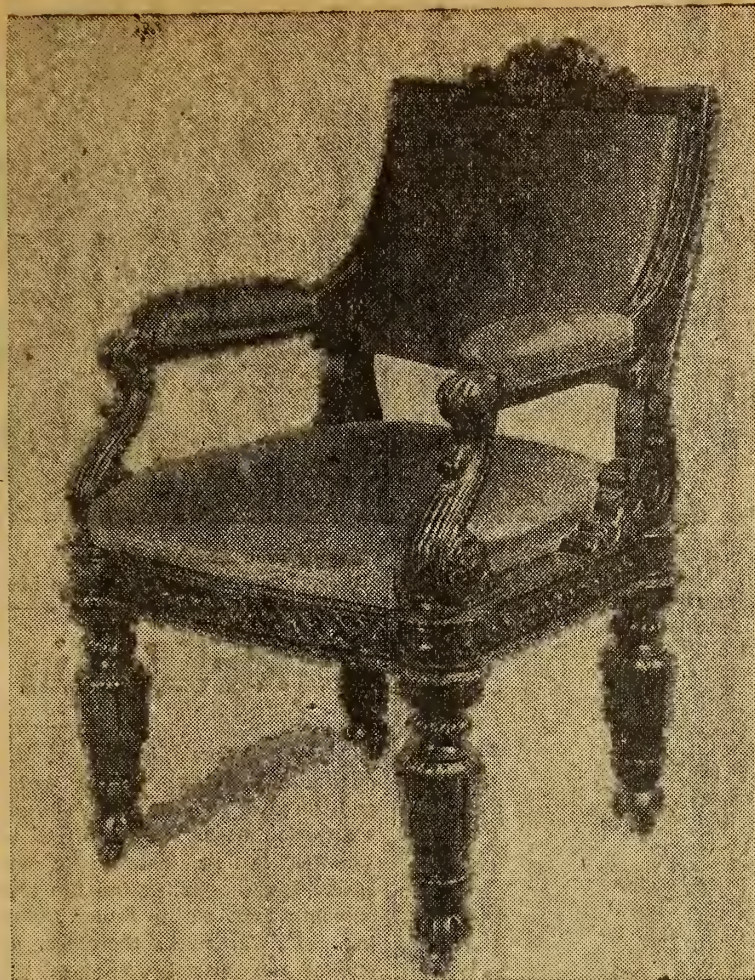
Interior

MADE FOR LINCOLN BY HIS FRIENDS



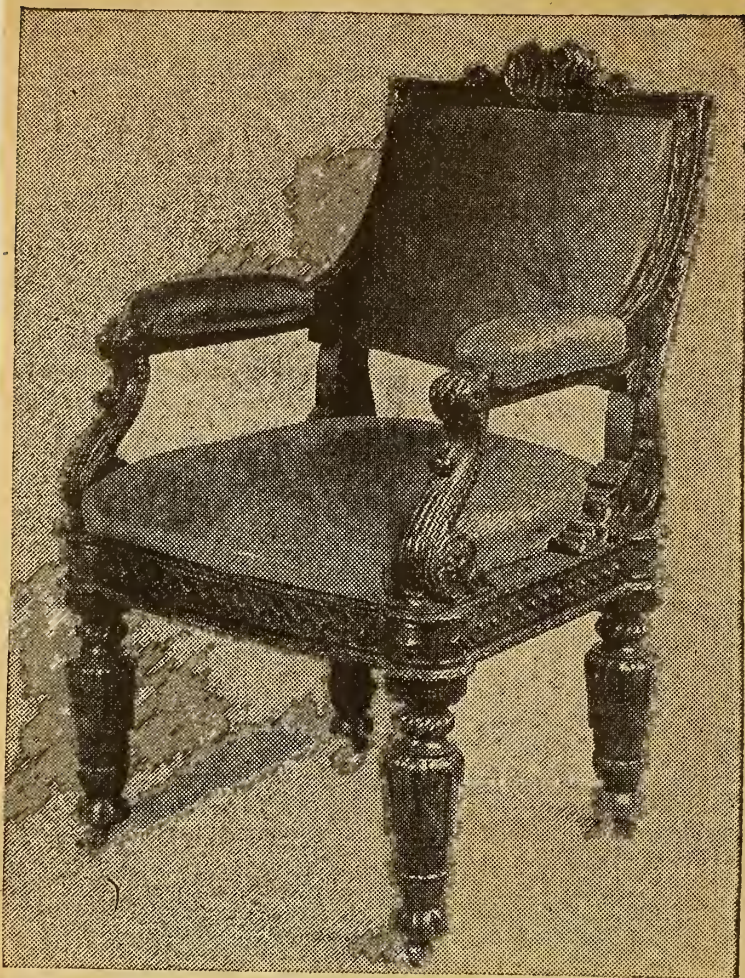
Chair constructed from the timbers of Lincoln's home in Macon county, Illinois, and presented to the future President in 1860. In the Burlingham collection to be sold at the American Art Association-Anderson Galleries next week.

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AS THE STYLE DEGENERATED IN AMERICA

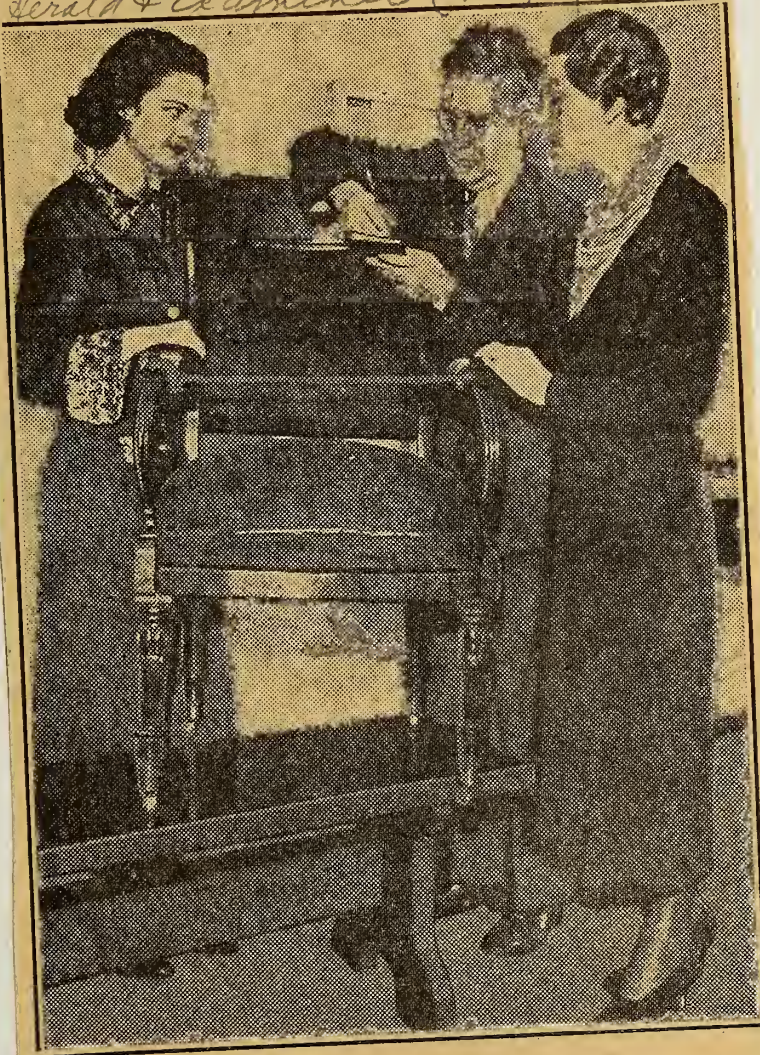


Abraham Lincoln's chair, made from timbers of his old home. It follows the Empire tradition in its use of massive lines and over ornamentation. Courtesy of American Art Association-Anderson Galleries.

ny. Sun April 13, 1935

Lincoln Relics IN HISTORIC DRAMA

Herald & Examiner (Chi) 2/11/36



Left to right, Anna Tampa; Lawrence Paquin, director of the Lincoln Day celebration to be held tomorrow night at the Civic Opera House, and Gale Page, inspecting the chair used in Congress by Abraham Lincoln. It will be used in tomorrow night's pageant and is the property of the Chicago Historical Society.

New P.O. Address
R.F.D. No. 2,
Pound Ridge,
New York

Dear Dr. Warren,

Mr. Harry E. Pratt, Illinois State Historian has suggested that I write to you. It is about the carved oak armchair presented in December 1860 to Abraham Lincoln made from timbers of a house he and his father built. This chair, sold at the American Art Association-Anderson Galleries Nov. 11, 1933 was fully described and illustrated in the catalogue of the collection of Hiram Burlingham. I saw the chair at that time and have a copy of catalogue. This states that the chair bears on its back a brass plate inscribed "Presented to Abraham Lincoln by his friends of Macon County as a mark of esteem--This chair made from timbers of the home he helped his father build--December 1860"

A duplicate of this chair, identical in the details of its carved design but without the brass plate is now owned by Mr Elmer E. Matthews of Rockport, Maine. He inherited some years ago from an uncle who was a lawyer in Washington, D.C. When Mr. Matthews consulted me he knew nothing of the labeled presentation chair. He only knew that his chair was used as a posing chair by Matthew Brady, the famous photographer of the Civil War period.

Mr. Matthews had his chair photographed and I have compared this with the illustration in Burlingham sale catalogue. They are clearly duplicates made at the same time and carved by the same man. The design is too elaborate for one to be a later copy of the other.

Have you in your extensive Lincoln file any details of 1860 which would give the circumstances of the presentation of the chair to President-elect Lincoln? Who were "his friends of Macon County" who secured the house timbers and had the chair made? Is there any reference to duplicates, one or more that these "friends" had made from the same oak timbers and retained for themselves? Did one of these friends later go to Washington as a Lincoln appointee, for he was the one from whom Brady acquired the chair that he used so frequently in his portrait photographs?

Any information that you can glean from your Lincoln collection would be much appreciated as I plan in May to write an article on Matthews-owned chair for my syndicated newspaper feature, Know Your Heirlooms

Faithfully,

Thomas H. Ormsbee

April 12, 1954

CHAIR

April 16, 1954

Mr. Thomas H. Ormsbee
R. F. D. 1
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Ormsbee:

There seem to be several of the chairs similar to the one presented to Mr. Lincoln but just how many I have been unable to tabulate. My feeling is that there was a considerable number of them in Washington used in some department that may have been dismantled and new furniture installed. There are several people to whom you might write who might give you more local information on the matter than I have.

Before me is the catalogue of the Andrew Anderson galleries for November 11, 1933 which reveals that the chair sold for \$800.00. This, of course, is the chair supposed to have been given to Abraham Lincoln by Macon County friends.

Will H. Towles, 4720 S. Chelsea Lane, Bethesda, Maryland in 1943 was in the possession of the original chair that he acquired in the Brady Gallery. He claims that President Lincoln presented this chair to Mathew Brady.

Fabian Bachrach, famous photographer at 54 E. 52nd Street, New York claims to have a chair in which Gardner photographed President Lincoln and similar to the alleged Brady chair. These people may be able to inform you about the origin of this unique piece of furniture.

Two other people who have chairs almost like if not identical with the one you mentioned are Samson Feldman, 2500 Roslyn Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland and Louis J. Kolb, 1629 Locust Avenue, Philadelphia.

I hope this will be of some assistance to you in discovering the origin of these unique pieces of furniture.

Very truly yours,

LAW:PE

Director

458. THE CELEBRATED CHAIR BELONGING TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN
MADE FROM THE TIMBERS OF HIS OLD HOME

Macon County, Ill., dated 1860
With profusely carved frame, the square back with pendants of laurel and oak leaves, crested by a United States shield with three stars, repeated upon the reverse, and flanked by laurel branches; the S-voluted arm supports enriched with imbrications and formal rosettes, the seat frame having a beaded guilloche band, with stars at the rounded corners. Massive tapering columnar legs carved with formal leafage and cupped in petal lappets, with fluted mushroom feet, castored. Slip seat, back, and arm pads covered in olive green muslin. Upon the back is a brass tablet inscribed: "*Presented to Abraham Lincoln by his friends of Macon County as a mark of esteem—This chair made from timbers of the home he helped his father build—December 1860.*"

Note: This famous chair was given by Mrs. Lincoln to an intimate friend of the President, Dr. Jacob R. Freese, of whom Lincoln writes in a letter to J. S. Ten Eyck, dated Sept. 19, 1864: "Doctor J. R. Freese, now editor of a leading Union Journal in New Jersey, resided for a time in Illinois, when and where I made his acquaintance, and since when I have enjoyed much of his friendship . . ." Another letter, addressed to Secretary of War Stanton, dated Nov. 11, 1863, requests that Dr. Freese be appointed to the command of a colored regiment. *Vide Century Magazine*, Vol. IX, p. 206, and Vol. X, p. 226. Dr. Freese, a banker and newspaper owner of Trenton, was born near Hope, Warren Co., N. J., Mar. 4, 1826, a descendant of Dutch and English pioneers. He studied medicine in Philadelphia and practiced in Bloomington, Ill., returning to New Jersey in 1857, when he became proprietor of the merged New Jersey State Gazette and Republican. He served during the Civil War as Assistant Adjutant of U. S. Volunteers; was a banker in Trenton after the war, and a Commissioner to the Paris Exposition. He died in Trenton, 1885. His wife was Libby S. Swayze, a magazine writer and editor of some reputation.

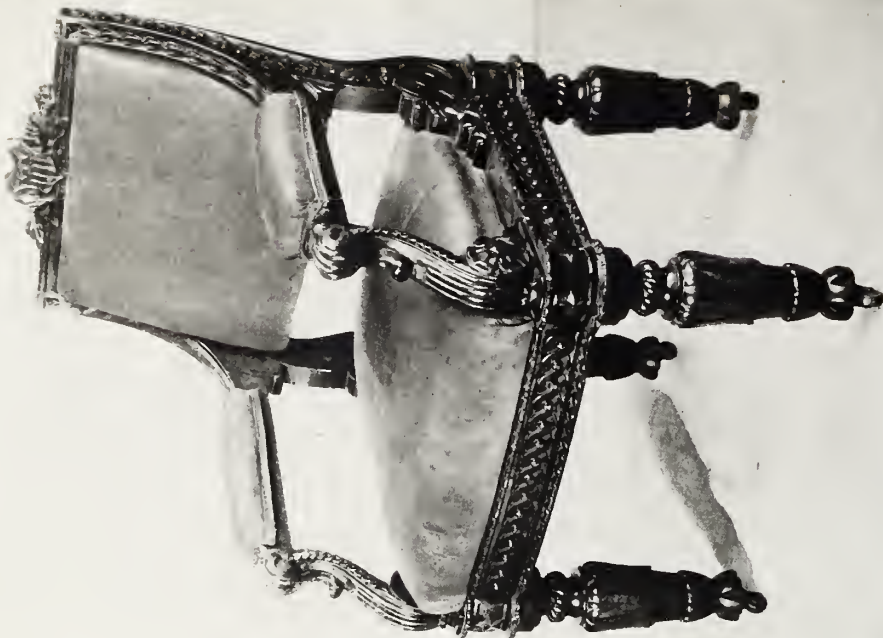
Presented by Mrs. Lincoln to Col. Freese
Collection of Col. Jacob R. Freese, M.D. (1826-1885), Trenton, N. J.
Collection of Samuel Wetmore (1810-1884), Allenhurst, N. J. and
New York, his banking associate
Collection of Maj. William Boerum Wetmore (1850-1922), Allenhurst, N. J. and New York, his son

[See illustration]

[NUMBER 458]

Now owned by Col. Freese, N.Y. Hall.
1629 Locust St Phila Pa

Given by Mrs. Anne Orsted.



For more information on similar chairs noted in this file, see file:

Curios & Relics – Furniture – Chairs – U.S. Congress

71.2009.085.04484

